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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004221

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: VP HASHEMI ON ALLYING WITH KURDS AND STABILIZING
NINEWA

Classified By: Acting Deputy Political Counselor Rob Waller for reasons
1.4 (b,d).

11. (C) Summary: The Ambassador met on 30 December with Vice President and Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) head Tariq al-Hashemi. Hashemi said the purpose of the IIP-Kurdish agreement last week was to pressure the GOI to work harder for political progress and to cooperate against increasing violence in Mosul province, but not to threaten the Shia parties or supplant the quadripartite "Moderates Bloc." He called for revamping the Ninewa Provincial Council (PC), holding provincial elections as soon as possible, and generating formal dialogue among local leaders to reduce perceived Kurdish political dominance in the province. Hashemi condemned Turkish airstrikes earlier this month which killed and displaced Iraqi civilians but promised to support the de-Ba'athification draft in the COR and penal reform in advance of a long-term bilateral security agreement. End summary.

Hashimi Explains IIP-Kurd Agreement

12. (C) The Ambassador opened the meeting by congratulating Hashemi on the IIP's recent denunciation by Usama bin Laden, for which Hashemi expressed his hearty gratitude. The Ambassador then asked about the agreement last week between the IIP, Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), which Hashemi described as a signal to the Maliki government to move the political process forward. He said the agreement does not replace the existing alliance between the KDP, PUK, Dawa party, and Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), and that ISCI should understand the new agreement is a not a threat.

Stabilize Ninewa With Elections and Dialogue

13. (C) Hashemi declared his support for balancing the Ninewa PC and holding a formal dialogue among political actors to slow the violence in Ninewa province. Balancing the Kurd-dominated PC is the key to provincial security, Hashemi argued, and he expressed strong support for adding non-Kurdish deputies to the PC in spite of the questionable constitutionality of such a move. The Vice President said he would tweak the PC even more than was done in Anbar earlier this year and vowed he would not insist that IIP candidates dominate the new spots, as long as the end result was better proportional representation. He also claimed to support provincial elections as soon as possible, citing May 2008 as a target date, to break the political deadlock even though the IIP risks losing positions in some provinces.

14. (C) The Vice President offered avenues for improving dialogue among Kurds, Arab Sunnis, and other groups in Ninewa. The IIP-Kurdish agreement establishes a committee to address security in the province, which an IIP

delegation on 31 December will discuss in Erbil with Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani and Vice President Kosrat Rasul. Hashemi also detailed plans for a conference of Kurdish, Sunni, Christian, and other leaders in Mosul.

Hashimi Condemns Turkish Bombing

15. (C) Hashemi condemned Turkey,s recent bombings that killed Iraqi civilians as counterproductive. He said as the Iraqi Vice President he was responsible for any civilians killed or displaced, regardless of their location or ethnicity. He also claimed he had avoided direct contact with Turkish officials since the bombing, although he planned to see the Turkish Ambassador later that day. The Ambassador asked about President Talabani,s claim last week that Turkey was disrupting security in Mosul and that Hashemi would give more information. Hashemi said he had no concrete evidence of such meddling and noted that the Kurdish, not Turkish, position has contributed to instability in Mosul.

Supporting Prison Reform and De-Ba,th Law

16. (C) The Ambassador commended the cabinet for producing an amnesty bill and noted that reforming Iraq,s detention procedures would be a major issue in upcoming long-term security talks. Hashemi suggested the USG offer its own prisoner release to complement the GOI amnesty, and agreed Iraq,s prisons are not up to basic standards. He cited his recent visit to Sousa prison in Suleimaniyah as a hopeful example, however, saying the prison met his standards

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for providing services and respecting human rights. Even the Al Qaida detainees he spoke to had not complained about their treatment.

17. (C) Finally, the Ambassador asked briefly about the status of the de-Ba,thification law, which Hashemi emphatically claimed the IIP supports and would help to pass. He said the bill was stalling because of "others" - probably a swipe at the Sadr bloc - but that the IIP would coordinate more closely with the Kurds on key legislation as a result of their new agreement.

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